Erik Drebit

Best Practice/Resource Sharing Carousel

**Combining Course Content with Literacy Test Preparation**

**Rationale**:

During my second practicum, I took over a Grade 10 History class which was preparing to write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. I spoke with some of the students about their thoughts, feelings and concerns with the literacy test approaching, and was surprised to find that many of them were uneasy about the OSSLT. In order to address some of these student concerns, I felt that it would be best to combine my instruction with literacy test preparation.

**Goal**:

To prepare students for the OSSLT, while still teaching course content (specifically, in my case, historical content from the 1920s and 30s unit in CHC2D).

**Methods**: (As opposed to being one specific activity, this was instead a sort of defining rationale for the skills that I would seek to teach throughout the unit.)

1. Visit the EQAO’s Literacy Test website, (http://www.eqao.com/Educators/Secondary/10

/10.aspx?Lang=E&gr=10) and/or read any available materials at your school about the OSSLT, and familiarize yourself with the form, goals, and marking strategies.

1. Identify the specific skills necessary for success on the Literacy Test (these skills are certainly not exclusive to the OSSLT, and have value across disciplines) and come up with ways in which they can be integrated into your day-to-day coursework.

Some examples of how I did this:

* Summary-writing skills (have students, or groups, summarize readings).
* Supporting an opinion (have students write short opinion pieces as consolidation).
* Reading for specific details (model extracting the “key” information from written pieces, and have students select important information from larger readings).

1. You can also create specific short assignments or lessons, which include course content but use the specific format of the OSSLT. Two examples of this that I employed were a news report assignment (based on a famous athlete of the 1920s) and a short introductory article on the Great Depression, with OSSLT-style “reading for understanding” questions.
2. Be sure to be transparent (“This skill will be valuable on the Literacy Test”) and debrief each activity with students. By doing so, you will (hopefully) alleviate some student fears surrounding the test, and offer them practice and tips to help insure their success.